

Valley Telework Project Selects Companies for Pilot Program

In mid-October, the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA) announced the selection

- employees) Phoenix
- City of Avondale, (60 employees)
- City of Mesa, (3,800 employees)
- City of Scottsdale, (2,200 employees)
- Community Church of Joy, (85 employees) Glendale
- Information Network Corporation, (197 employees) Phoenix
- Mountain Park Health Center, (100 employees) Phoenix
- Roosevelt

School District, (155 employees) Phoenix
The pilot project is designed to help

zations technical assistance to effectively integrate telework concepts into their workforce. RPTA studies indicate that Valley companies that implement teleworking correctly have achieved a 10 to 20 percent increase in productivity. Companies with telework programs also report improved morale, decreased overhead, and improved recruitment and retention of employees.

This special project, funded by

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of ten organizations to participate in its new telework pilot project. These businesses and municipalities have already begun to receive specialized consulting services from a group of nationally recognized telework consultants.

The selected organizations represent a wide variety of businesses throughout the Valley, including both large and small employers. They include:

- AAA Arizona, (270 employees) Phoenix
- Carollo Engineers, (75 employees) Phoenix
- CIGNA Healthcare, (500

Valley businesses start or expand successful telework programs, and give organi-



A La Carte Program Is Initiated

Since selecting ten Valley businesses to participate in the first phase of the Valley Telework Project, RPTA has announced the addition of its a la carte program.

The same consultants are providing free services to the following companies that have requested assistance in developing or expanding their telework program.

- City of Glendale
- City of Tempe
- Banner Health System
- Prudential Property & Casualty Insurance
- WestGroup Research

- City of Goodyear
- Phoenix Transit System*

The a la carte program's consultants will offer technical support, training and management briefings to help craft the company's telework policies.



Telework more feasible, fast thanks to advances in technology

With new technologies constantly coming to the forefront, telework is becoming more widespread and practical for companies, from small to large. Here's a peek at some of the innovative tools making telework attractive to more and more employers.

Wireless communications, speeding transmission of data and eliminating the need for numerous and inconvenient cable attachments linking computers enable teleworkers to stay connected to their employers. Mobile phones, laptop

computers and other handheld devices are standard equipment for employees who wish to work from home. Now, two new wireless technologies are emerging: those via short-range radio transmissions, and those provided through electrical outlets.

Bluetooth, Inc., a joint effort of high-tech companies such as 3Com, Ericsson, Intel, IBM, Lucent, Microsoft, Motorola, Nokia and Toshiba, offers wireless connectivity via short-range radio signals. The pioneer of this low-cost, low-power mode of transmission anticipates the technology will be built into

hundreds of millions of electronic devices by the year 2002.

High-speed wireless connectivity and other technologies are making remote working easier and more convenient. Instant messaging, for example, provides real-time communication between workers, but does away with the need for chit-chat.. For example, 59 percent of America On Line (AOL) daily Instant Messaging users report that the service has reduced the amount of telephone calls they make.

Teleworkers can juggle many customers at once using instant messaging, and even bring

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Business Partners Are Key To Valley Telework's Success

The Valley Telework Project achieved a successful launch, in part, to the creative outreach undertaken by our business partners. These business and civic organizations contacted more than 8,000 organizations about the pilot program, and encouraged them to participate in the telework assistance effort. Partners include:

East Valley Partnership
Greater Phoenix Economic Council
Phoenix Chamber of Commerce
Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce
Scottsdale Leadership

Tempe Chamber of Commerce
Valley Forward
WESTMARC

During the next years, these organizations will sponsor special workshops for their members to present the benefits of teleworking and provide training for companies that want technical assistance. If your company is a member of one of these organizations, look for Valley Telework Project updates in future newsletters and upcoming programs.

Pilot Program Helps Businesses Expand Telework

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the Maricopa Association of Governments, has an overall goal to increase the number of local teleworkers from the current 67,200 to more than 87,000 over the next few years. In 1995, there were just over 44,200 daily teleworkers in the Valley.

Randi Alcott, RPTA Rideshare Manager said, "We are extremely pleased with the businesses who volunteered to participate in our pilot project. We have a very diverse mix of companies, and their efforts at developing telework programs will serve as a model to other companies throughout the Valley."

A consortium of national telework consultants are providing the technical assistance. Leading the effort is TManage, Inc., a national firm specializing in telework management. TManage provides comprehensive solutions to manage remote access and teleworker programs.

It also uses new technologies to design, develop, and launch telework programs. TManage is joined by Elham Shirazi and Peter Valk, telework consultants who have worked around the country developing new programs for businesses and government agencies.

"CIGNA Healthcare is honored to participate in the Valley Telework Project. We see this project as an excellent way for us to measure the effectiveness

of telecommuting in improving employee satisfaction as well as productivity," said Bob Picinich, general manager of Arizona, healthplan operations.

"With the dramatic growth of Mesa, we are committed to programs that support telecommuting and alternative work

hours for our employees," said Mike Hutchinson, city manager of Mesa. "The Valley Telework Project is a great way to help us achieve that goal and to provide services in an efficient and environmentally-conscious manner."

The Valley Telework Project consists of two elements. Under the pilot project, participants will be offered free technical assistance to either develop a comprehensive telework program or help formalize and expand an existing

"With the dramatic growth of Mesa, we are committed to programs that support telecommuting and alternative work hours for our employees."

—Mike Hutchinson, Mesa City Manager

program. These ten companies were selected through a competitive application process. In a second tier effort, RPTA will make the same consultants available to provide free "a la carte" telework services for another organizations who have requested assistance.

Technology Speeds Telework

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several clients together in a private chat session, much like a conference call. New technology even makes it possible for users to initiate a voice call right from their computer if a more personal forum is needed for business communication.

Voice portals, or voice-recognition technology, is making it easier for people to access Web-based information via the telephone. Now being used to provide database-oriented information such as phone numbers, movie listings and restaurant addresses, experts predict this technology will spread to all sorts of Web-based

information in the next few years. For teleworkers without computers, this new technology will enable them to access their employer's intranet by phone.

The face of wireless and internet technology is changing and improving at a remarkable pace, opening the door for more employers to initiate a telework program for little cost. If you would like more information about how RPTA can assist your company with a telework program, please call (602) 262-7433 or visit us on the web at

www.valleymetro.maricopa.gov

RPTA Wins National Telework Award

In September, the RPTA received the Outstanding Innovation in Telework Award from the International Telework Association & Council. This prestigious award recognized the agency's telework materials and services that have been developed during the past year.



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